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Sent prepaid on receipt of price by

Walter H. Baker & Company

No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

A College Man

A Comedy in Four Acts

By

EARL REED SILVERS

NOTE

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BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1917

A College Man

CHARACTERS

(As originally produced by the Queen's Players of Rutgers College,
April 6, 1915, at the New Jersey State Normal School,
Newark, N. J.)

BILL RENDALL, <i>Sophomore</i>	Anton A. Raven '16
PEANUT JONES, <i>Freshman</i>	Lawrence H. French '17
BUDD STONE, <i>Junior</i>	Harry N. Blue '15
TED WILLIS, <i>Senior</i>	George H. Whisler '16
PROFESSOR "JOHNNY" MILLER	William P. E. Ainsworth '16
MR. STONE, <i>Budd's dad</i>	Roy M. D. Richardson '15
GERALDINE HARRIS, <i>aristocrat</i>	Robert A. McKenzie '18
ZELDA SAUNDERS, <i>the girl</i>	Arthur L. Fink '18
MRS. BROWNLEY, <i>chaperon</i>	Stanley I. Horn '16

SYNOPSIS

TIME.—A week after the opening of college.

SCENE.—A fraternity study.

ACT I. Early afternoon.

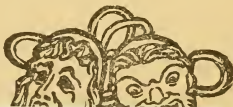
ACT II. Evening of the same day.

(During Act II the curtain will be lowered
to denote an interval of forty minutes.)

ACT III. Two-thirty the next morning.

ACT IV. Nine o'clock of the same morning.

TIME OF PERFORMANCE.—About one hour and a half.



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no 1.

\$0.25

SYNOPSIS OF ACTION

ACT I.—Bill Rendall flunks his reëxamination and resolves to crib during his next and last trial. He and Peanut make out a crib. Budd Stone finds he must give back his college money to his father, or the home farm will be lost. Budd tells Bill about his predicament. Mr. Stone comes for the money. Budd refuses to give it to him, because he is in love with Zelda.

ACT II.—Bill Rendall is placed on his honor and refuses to cheat. He flunks the exam. Budd proposes to Zelda, who refuses him because he has never done anything worth while. Ted Willis tells Zelda he loves her, but she tells him of her feeling for Budd. Bill Rendall tries to shock Geraldine, but is shocked in return.

ACT III.—Mr. Stone comes in the middle of the night and attempts to steal the money from Budd. Ted catches him in the room, and finds out how things stand.

ACT IV.—Bill prepares to go home. Mr. Stone comes for a last talk with Budd. Budd sends him into the bedroom. Peanut goes into the bedroom for a suit-case. He discovers Mr. Stone and brands him as a thief. Budd acknowledges his father and resolves to go home with him. Zelda announces that Budd has stopped drifting, and that she will marry him.

COSTUMES

BILL RENDALL	} Acts I, III and IV. Ordinary suits. Act II.
PEANUT JONES	
BUDD STONE	
White flannels.	
TED WILLIS.	Act I. Ordinary suit, football suit. Act II.
White flannels.	Acts III and IV. Ordinary suit.
PROF. "JOHNNY" MILLER.	Acts I, II, III and IV. Ordinary suit.
MR. STONE.	Farmer's clothes, not too noticeable.
GERALDINE HARRIS.	Act II. Evening dress. Act IV. Shirt-waist and skirt.
ZELDA SAUNDERS.	Act II. Evening dress. Act IV. Shirt-waist and skirt.
MRS. BROWNLEY.	Act II. Black evening dress. Act IV. Suit.

PROPERTIES

Bell, telephone, victrola, piano, table lamp, package of Necco Wafers, fountain pen, paper, girl's picture, pack of cards, Algebra book, pipe, pack of Fatimas, victrola records (Barcarolle from Tales of Hoffman, Blue Danube, any fox trot), roll of money, keys, drum sticks, books for table, cornet (if Peanut can use one).

CHARACTER SUGGESTIONS

WILLIS. A large, strong young man, slightly older than the others.

STONE. Ordinary boy.

RENDALL. A droll boy.

JONES. A fat boy, if possible.

PROF. MILLER. Dignified.

GERALDINE. Tall, angular and proud.

ZELDA. Pretty and natural.

MRS. BROWNLEY. Any type.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

C. means center, D. C. down center, U. C. up center, D. R. down right, R. C. right center, U. R. C. up right center, D. L. down left, L. C. left center, U. L. C. up left center, C. E. center entrance, L. E. left entrance, R. E. right entrance.

A College Man

ACT I

SCENE.—*A fraternity study. Entrances R., L. and C. back. The entrance at R. is supposed to be to WILLIS' room; that at L. to STONE'S room; the back entrance to the public hall. There is a victrola in upper right corner of the stage, and a piano at upper left. A fireplace down R. with a chair in front of it. Just above door at L. is a desk. There is a table at C. with four chairs about it, and a sofa down L.*

(Curtain discovers TED WILLIS, BUDD STONE and BILL RENDALL playing cards at center table. PEANUT JONES on sofa to L. Sounds of singing can be heard before curtain is raised.)

REN. *(leading singing).*

I've second-handed ulsterettes,
And everything else so fine,
For all the boys they trade with me
At one hundred and forty-nine.

WIL.
STONE } *(joining).*

Oh, Mister Levi, tra, la, la, la . . .
Poor Sheeny Levi, tra, la, la, la, la, la, la,
My name is Solomon Levi.
At my store on Salem Street,
There's where you buy your coats and vests,
And everything else that's neat;
I've second-handed ulsterettes
And everything else that's fine,
For all the boys they trade with me
At one hundred and forty-nine.

PEA. (*chanting*). At one hundred and forty-nine. (*Men at table arrange cards.*) Some singer, I am. A regular little bird. I should flutter. (*Flutters arms.*)

(*Bell rings off main entrance.*)

WIL. All right, Peanut, flutter down-stairs and see who's at the door.

(*Exit PEA., main entrance. REN. to fireplace; looks worried.*)

REN. It's for me, I guess. I ought to be hearing about that math exam by now.

WIL. Do you think you got through? (*Walks to sofa.*)

REN. Surest thing you know. It was a cinch.

STONE. Do you have to pass it to stay in college?

(*Plays idly with cards.*)

REN. Right. My two exams in English were (*pausing*) eminently unsuccessful. One of the questions requested me to tell who wrote "To be or not to be," and also to state the occasion of the remark. I said that Solomon wrote it in his Proverbs when he was thinking about getting married again. I never knew until yesterday that Milton wrote it.

(*Others laugh.*)

WIL. Shakespeare, you poor nut.

REN. All right, Shakespeare then. But say, that was some joke.

Enter PEA., main entrance.

PEA. A letter for the Honorable William Rendall. (*Up c.*)

REN. Hand it here, boy, hand it here. (*To R. c.*)

PEA. (*turning letter over*). It's from the College Office. Something tells me it brings bad news.

REN. I also have a premonition. (*Sternly.*) Freshman!

PEA. (*attention*). Yes, sir.

REN. Letter.

PEA. (*flipping letter to table*). Let 'er flicker.

REN. (*taking envelope, opens it slowly*). Well, I'll be darned. (*Hands letter to WIL.*)

WIL. (*reading*). "Mr. Rendall: Failed in algebra. Re-examination September 20, 1914."

PEA. My premonition was right.

REN. (*rising*). Dog-gone it, anyhow. I'll swear I got through that exam. (*Up R. C.*)

PEA. And now you're swearing because you didn't. Ain't nature wonderful? (*Sits on table.*)

REN. Aw, shut up. (*Walks up and down room.*) Darn the luck, anyhow. I'm stuck out, I guess.

PEA. Humph, you talk as if you've done something big. Anybody can get stuck out. Even my chest can do that. (*Puffs out chest. WIL. reaches over and knocks him on chest.*) Puff! (*Loses his wind suddenly.*)

STONE. Look out, Peanut, or you'll blow us all away.

PEA. It isn't the first time I've had to "blow." But listen, Bill; the reason some people never get ahead is because they haven't got a head. Now, look at me for instance.

WIL. Stop the funny work, Peanut. (*To REN.*) You have another chance, haven't you, Bill?

REN. (*bitterly*). Yes, a fat chance I've got. Why, darn it, Ted, I know I got through that exam. It's "Johnny" Miller's fault. He doesn't like me; says I fool too much. It won't do any good to take another exam. I'm stuck out, as sure as fate.

STONE. Can't you repeat?

REN. Repeat! Say, my Dad wouldn't even let me repeat the alphabet. He's a Phi Jakey Snapper man. It means I get through, or go home. And I have a very faint idea that I'm going home.

WIL. Don't quit cold, Bill. Take a chance on the exam, and pass it. (*Down R.*)

REN. It means five bucks, and I'll probably have to stay home from the dance to-night. And, anyhow, I haven't got five dollars. (*Up L.*)

PEA. (*motioning to STONE*). Oh, John Jacob Astor will lend you that. He's the banker of this house.

(STONE *paces up and down L.*)

REN. I'd do it if I thought I had a chance. But I haven't, fellows. That Prof. would stick me if I got a hundred. He's down on me, that's all there is to it.

WIL. (*earnestly*). You're wrong, Bill. The profs as a whole are a pretty square bunch of men.

(WIL. and REN. *down C.* PEA. *to fireplace.*)

REN. Did you ever have Johnny Miller?

WIL. Yes.

REN. What do you think of him?

WIL. I think he's a *good, square* man.

REN. (*impatiently*). Oh, it's all right for you to talk, you didn't get stuck. But I tell you, Ted, I got through that exam; I know I did. The only stuff I didn't do was the Progressions.

PEA. You ought to join the Progressive party.

WIL. Shut up! Why don't you go to see the Prof. and talk it over?

REN. I might tell him what I think of him. (*Laughs.*) Then I *would* get stuck out.

WIL. Well, I've got to go to practice. Take another chance, that's my advice, Bill.

(*Around right of table. Exit, main entrance.*)

REN. (*bitterly*). I have half a mind to crib through the stuff. Other fellows do it. (*Down R.*)

PEA. Yes, but who are they? "Mucker" James and men like him. He isn't a man, though, he's a mistake. (*To C.*)

REN. Oh, he isn't such a terribly bad scout. (*Walks up and down room.*) Darn it, I think I'll do it, Peanut.

PEA. Well, it isn't my funeral. It seems to me, though, I'd rather get stuck out than crib.

REN. That's what we all think until we're going to get stuck out. It's easy enough not to cheat when you don't have to. (*Turns to STONE.*) What do you think about it, Budd?

STONE (*slowly*). I wouldn't skin when the Prof. places you on your honor, and treats you squarely. But if he's such a crab as Johnny Miller, and sticks you on purpose, I think you have a right to crib. (*Down C., left of table.*)

REN. This man Miller isn't human. I could have gotten through last year if I'd cheated. And he'd probably think more of me at that.

STONE. Can you crib the stuff you're taking with him?

REN. Man, I can be the best little cribber that ever was. Why, I spent the first year of my life in a crib.

PEA. I don't approve. But now that you've decided, how are you going to do it? (*Down R.*)

REN. Let me think.

PEA. You want to look out. You might strain yourself.

REN. Did you ever hear about Jack Reimer? About four years ago he made out a crib for calculus. But the crib was so large he divided it and put a bunch of papers in each pocket, and then he found he couldn't remember what stuff was in each pocket. So he made out an index, a regular crib for a crib. But when he got to class the poor boob couldn't find the paper with the index on it, and he got stuck—higher'n a kite.

PEA. You ought to send that to *Puck*.

REN. I have an idea —

PEA. (*interrupting*). Budd, look, he has an idea. Where is it? (*Hunts around room.*)

REN. Peanut, you're so bright your father calls you son. (*Groan.*) But listen, you go over to Louis' and buy me a package of Necco Sweets, white ones. Be sure that they are white.

PEA. What for?

REN. Never mind; go on over and hurry back.

(*To fireplace.*)

PEA. Well, I don't like Necco Sweets much, but I guess I can eat a couple. [*Exit, main entrance up c.*]

REN. Know what I'm going to do, Bud? I'm going to copy formulas on those Neccos and then take the candies into the class room. After looking at the questions, I take out a candy, and if one of the formulas is on that piece, I copy it, and then (*putting hand to mouth*) away goes the evidence. If I have all the formulas in the package, by the time I get through eating, I'll know how to do every example. And the crib will be all eaten up.

STONE. If you spent as much time studying as you do in thinking up these schemes, you'd be at the head of your class.

REN. (*frowning*). I don't like the idea of cribbing very much. (*Lightly.*) Oh, well, it's the Prof.'s fault. Gosh, I'd like to meet Johnny Miller just about now.

STONE. Do you think there's any chance of your getting stuck out?

REN. Not if I crib.

STONE. And are you really going to crib?

REN. What do you think I'm buying those Necco Sweets for? Do you think I'd eat the blame things?

STONE (*resignedly*). Well, I guess you won't get stuck out then.

REN. (*half resentfully*). You talk as if you wanted me to get stuck out. (*Down R. C.*)

STONE (*slowly*). No, I don't. (*Rises.*) I want to ask you something, Bill. (*To C.*)

REN. Go ahead; even the profs like to ask me things.

STONE. No, quit fooling. I'm in trouble, and I have to talk to some one about it.

REN. (*changing*). I'm sorry, Budd. Anything I can do?

STONE. Yes, you can advise me. (*Takes turn up and down room. Speaks, voice shaking slightly.*) Ever since I came down here, Bill, I posed as a rich man's son. I spent lots of money, and I told-you that my father owned the biggest estate up in Connecticut. But he doesn't. The big estate is a forty acre farm, and it hardly pays for itself. We are poor, Bill; so poor that I haven't any right down here.

REN. What! If you are poor, I wonder what the rest of us are?

STONE. Quit fooling, Bill. I'm serious. When I left for college last week, there was some kind of note due that we expected to pay by selling a corner lot on the farm. I brought down with me five hundred dollars, the bulk of this year's expenses. My parents have been saving up for years to get enough to send me to college, and this is the last of what they saved. I thought everything was all right, but yesterday I got a letter from Dad. It seems that he couldn't sell the corner lot after all, and he has to have five hundred dollars, or lose the farm; a mortgage will be foreclosed. I don't know, but I don't see how it can be as bad as that. And now, if I send back the money, it means I'll have to quit college. (*Down L.*)

REN. Can't you get a job, and stick for a while?

STONE. I couldn't bear to do it. I've always posed as rich, and now, if I suddenly say I'm not, people will think I'm a fake. I am, I guess, but Bill, I couldn't do it.

REN. (*practically*). Tell 'em that your father lost all his money in a stock deal, and you have to work. You'd be a regular hero.

STONE (*rather impatiently*). You don't understand, Bill. There's a girl in this. You know Zelda Saunders? Well, I—I'm hit pretty hard with her. She thinks I'm rich, and if the money goes back, she'll know I'm a cheap skate, and I won't be able to take her anywhere, or anything.

REN. I always thought Ted and Zelda were pretty good friends.

STONE. They are. It's between Ted and me. Don't you see, if she knows he is rich and I am poor, I won't stand a chance.

(Bell rings in hall.)

REN. *(earnestly)*. You're wrong, Budd. I don't think a thing like that would make any difference to a girl like Zelda.

STONE. I couldn't let her know. That's all there is to it. Dad has to get the money some way. Darn it, Bill, I don't know what to do. *(Walks up and down room.)*

Enter PEA., main entrance, down R.

PEA. *(excitedly)*. Here's your crib, kid, quick, hide it. Johnny's down-stairs.

REN. Who?

PEA. Johnny Miller, the "math" Prof. And he wants to see you. *(Falls on REN.'s shoulder in mock faint.)*

REN. For the love of Mike, help. Where is he?

PEA. Down-stairs. I told him you'd be down in a minute. Ted and some of the others are with him.

STONE. Ask him up here, Bill; I'm going down-town.

REN. All right, Budd, thanks. *(To PEA.)* Peanut, you go in there. *(Points to L. entrance.)* If I do anything rash, you come out and restrain me. Will you ask him to come up, Budd?

STONE. Surely. Watch out, Bill, he's a terrible crab.

[Exit, main entrance.]

REN. If we were anywhere but in the Fraternity house, I could tell him what I think of him. But now I suppose I'll have to be decent. *(Points to L. entrance.)* Beat it.

[Exit PEA., L. entrance.]

Enter STONE and PROFESSOR "JOHNNY" MILLER.

STONE. Here's Professor Miller, Bill.

REN. *(offering hand)*. How do you do, sir? Will you sit down?

PROF. Yes, I thank you. *(PROF. on one side of table, REN. on the other.)* I came to see you about your reëxamination, Mr. Rendall. I sincerely regret that you did not pass.

REN. *(half humorously)*. I feel rather bad about it myself, Professor. I thought surely I had gotten through.

PROF. Your mark was exactly fifty-seven per cent. I felt that I could not conscientiously give you another point.

REN. (*resentfully*). I don't see how I could have failed. I did eight out of ten, and six of those must have been right. I knew the formulas.

PROF. The third example was entirely wrong. The first, fourth and eighth were right in method but wrong in arrangement and figuring. I gave you seven points in the first two, and five in the third. (*Earnestly*.) I endeavored to give you a passing mark.

REN. (*leaning forward, earnestly*). Professor, I went over all those examination questions with a book after class. They were started right, anyhow, and I think I ought to be given some credit for that. (*Resentfully*.) It took me almost two hours to learn those formulas.

PROF. Are you sure you learned the formulas?

REN. Learned them? Why, of course I did. (*Pauses as meaning of remark becomes clear*.) Do you mean to say you thought I cribbed them?

(*Rises, with hands in pockets, looks at PROF.*)

PROF. (*rising*). Mr. Rendall, I'm sorry if I am misjudging you. But I shall speak frankly. You attempted to solve eight examples. In all of them the formula, generally the most difficult feature, was correct. In four of them the work was entirely wrong. You do not understand the working principles of the subject. There are many ways of securing the correct formula. Do I make myself clear?

REN. Perfectly clear, sir. You think that I cheated, so you stuck me.

PROF. I failed to pass you because your work did not warrant a mark of sixty. The other matter is a confidence between you and me.

REN. (*pausing for a moment, takes pipe from pocket*). Do you mind if I smoke, sir?

PROF. Why, no.

(REN. *fills pipe, lights it. Smokes for a minute.* PROF. *idly fingers package of Necco Sweets.*)

REN. Will you have a Necco Sweet?

PROF. No, I thank you.

REN. (*walking length of floor*). Professor, you have been frank with me, and I am going to tell you just what I think about the thing. I didn't skin. I haven't cribbed since I entered high school. If a Prof. gives me a square deal, I'm

willing to be square with him. But I don't think you've been square with me. And now, when I take that reëxam I'm going to crib every chance I get. (*Down R.*)

PROF. (*rising*). I'm sorry to hear you talk like that, Mr. Rendall. (*Kindly.*) We profs sometimes make mistakes, the same as the rest of you. We want to be fair with the boys, but sometimes we find a student who resents our efforts and who thinks that all professors are his natural enemies. This is especially true in the first two years of college. But we want to be fair with you; that is why I came here this afternoon.

REN. (*respectfully*). I know, sir; but still you thought that I cribbed those formulas. I tell you, Professor, there isn't much cheating in this college. The few fellows who make a practice of skinning are looked down on by the rest of us. But when a Prof. treats us like a lot of children who have to be watched all the time, we think that we have a right to cheat. It's a fair fight between the Prof. and us.

PROF. No fight is fair which isn't fought aboveboard.

REN. I don't know, sir. When I take that reëxam with you, I'll consider it a fair fight if I can crib and get through. If I didn't want to be fair I wouldn't tell you. (*Bitterly.*) Even now you think that I'm a cheat. (*Down L.*)

PROF. No, I don't think so, Mr. Rendall; I have every confidence in your truthfulness. Another year or two at college, and you will see things in a different light.

REN. I don't know, sir. (*Pause.*) Perhaps I haven't got the right spirit, but it doesn't seem square to me. (*Down C.*)

PROF. Mr. Rendall, I feel assured that when the test comes you will do the right thing. (*Pause.*) But about the reëxamination. The marks must be in before to-morrow noon. Are you prepared to take the exam to-night?

REN. If I can borrow five dollars by that time I am.

PROF. Your Fraternity, I believe, is going to give a dance this evening. I have been invited. If acceptable to you, I shall give you the examination in this room at seven o'clock.

REN. Why here?

PROF. You will probably wish to attend the dance at the conclusion of the test. As I shall be here, the arrangement will be a convenience to each of us.

REN. We can probably have the room shut off until my fate is decided.

PROF. Very well, Mr. Rendall. I shall be here at eight o'clock.

REN. (*whimsically*). I expect to be here myself. I'm much obliged to you, sir.

PROF. I trust that you pass the examination to-night with honor.

REN. Thank you, sir. Will you let me see you down-stairs?

PROF. I believe I can find the way. I lived here myself once, you know. Good-day, Mr. Rendall. (*Offers hand.*)

REN. Good-day, sir. (*They shake hands. Exit PROF., main entrance. Enter PEA., L. entrance.*) Darn it, Peanut, he isn't such a bad scout after all.

PEA. What in the dickens did you tell him you were going to crib for?

REN. I had to be honest about it. But do you know, I sort of hate to do it now.

PEA. You told him you would. Now you'll have to.

REN. Yes, I guess I will. And, anyhow, he thought I cheated last time. Well, I said I'd do it, and I will. (*Pause.*) Oh, what do you think? I offered him a Necco and he wouldn't take it. I guess I'll ask him again to-night.

PEA. You'd better not. Don't trouble trouble till trouble troubles you.

REN. Well, we have to get to work. Have you got five dollars, Peanut?

PEA. (*falling against table, grasps head*). Help!

REN. Oh, well, I'll have to borrow it from Ted.

PEA. If he hasn't got it, ask Budd. He's the rich man of the place. (*Enter STONE, main entrance.*) Here he is now. Hand over five dollars, Mr. Vanderbilt.

REN. (*hurriedly*). Oh, no hurry. Come on, Peanut, we have to make out our crib. Get those Neccos.

PEA. Make the crib a small one, Bill. I want to eat some of the formulas.

(*Front door bell rings.*)

STONE. When do you take your exam?

REN. To-night, in this room. Do you think we can shut it off for an hour?

STONE. We expected to use this as a lounging room, but ask Ted. I guess it'll be all right.

Enter WIL., main entrance. He wears football suit.

WIL. Some one to see you, Budd.

STONE. Who?

WIL. I don't know. Some old geezer who looks like a farmer.

STONE. Tell him to come up, will you, Ted?

REN. Well, I guess we'll go. Come on, Fatty.

[*Exeunt REN. and PEA, main entrance.*]

(*WIL. shows old man to room. WIL. retires. Man enters.*

STONE *down L., back to door.*)

STONE (*looking around, starts back*). My God, Dad, what are you doing here?

MR. STONE. I come down, son, because you haven't answered my letter about the money. If we don't have it by Saturday, the place is lost.

STONE (*offering chair*). Sit down; let's talk the thing over.

MR. S. I won't keep you very long. I suppose you've been so busy that you haven't had time to write. I came down to New York to see about that sale, and when it fell through, I thought the only thing to do was to come here and get the money.

STONE (*walking to main entrance, pulls curtains together, makes grim face*). Gosh darn it.

MR. S. I'm sorry I had to come down and show myself before all these rich friends of yours. But the mother said you wouldn't be ashamed of your old Dad. We've worked pretty hard for you, boy.

STONE. Yes, of course. These men here aren't so rich, but they've always had things. They're gentlemen.

MR. S. Meaning that your father ain't.

STONE. No, of course not.

MR. S. Boy, let me tell you something. It isn't good clothes and nice manners that make a gentleman. What counts is the man himself. Any boy who does the right thing at the right time is a gentleman. (*Pause.*) Your mother sends her love. She is well.

STONE. She is? (*Rises.*) Well, what about the money? Can't you borrow it somewhere?

MR. S. Up where we come from, boy, we don't have money to give away; we are poor, most of us, and every dollar counts.

STONE. You managed to get enough to send me to college.

MR. S. Yes, we did, after twenty years of saving.

STONE (*impatiently*). Oh, I've heard all that before.

MR. S. (*slowly*). You've changed some down here.

STONE. Of course I have. (*Turns to father.*) But about the money! You can get it, can't you?

MR. S. Do you think I'd face this (*motioning to room and gaudy surroundings*) if I could get it somewhere else?

STONE. Well, what are you going to do?

MR. S. Do? Why, the only thing to do is to get the money from you. (*Passionately.*) I wouldn't do it, boy, if there was any other way.

STONE (*desperately*). Dad, can't you come around again? We're going to have a house party this afternoon, and I'm busy. (*Looks at watch.*)

MR. S. There won't be no need of my coming again. Maybe I can send you some money soon. We're still hoping to sell the field.

STONE. Can't you sell it before Saturday?

MR. S. No.

STONE (*desperately*). Can't you do anything?

MR. S. We can't do anything. I'm sorry to take your college money, but—but it's the only way.

STONE (*sitting, puts head in hands*). It means I've got to quit college.

MR. S. No, no—not that. Can't you find something to do? Other boys earn money at college.

(*Walks nearer STONE.*)

STONE (*looking up*). Dad, people here think I'm rich. If I get a job they'll know I'm poor. I'd rather leave.

MR. S. The job wouldn't make any difference, would it, to your Fraternity men and the boys of your class?

STONE (*shortly*). I wasn't thinking of them.

MR. S. (*rising, walks over to son*). Son, you know your Dad wouldn't hurt you if he could help it. Me and the mother have worked hard to send you down here. We've mortgaged the home, and she—she wore a straw hat all winter. It meant a little something for you. (*Changes.*) I'm sorry, son—give me check or cash and I'll go back. Things will come out all right. Maybe I can send you a little something soon.

STONE (*rising, looking at father*). Dad, I can't do it; I can't give you the money.

MR. S. (*starting back*). You can't? Have you spent the money?

STONE. No, I haven't spent it. It's in that drawer (*motioning to table*) and here's the key. I haven't spent it yet, but I'm going to. Mortgage the place, or get the money somehow. I can't leave this and go back there.

MR. S. You mean you won't?

STONE (*facing father across table*). I mean I won't.

(*Emphatically.*)

MR. S. Why?

STONE. Dad, I can't do it. I won't do it. There's a girl down here, and she thinks I'm rich. If she knew I am poor, she wouldn't have anything to do with me. I love her, Dad, and I'm going to keep the money for her.

MR. S. Girls don't count at a time like this.

STONE. They do. What does a mortgage count when my whole future is at stake?

MR. S. (*angrily*). I'm your father, and I command you to give me that money.

STONE. Father or not, I won't do it. You gave me the money and I'm going to keep it. I'm of age now, and you can't make me give it up.

MR. S. (*slowly*). So this is what we've made of you, our only son. (*Angrily.*) Do you mean to say you'd go back on your father and mother who've slaved for you for twenty-odd years? Is this the pay we get? Is this what college teaches you? Shall I go home and tell her what you've done?

STONE (*touched*). Dad, I can't, I can't. You don't understand. It means everything to me.

MR. S. And what does it mean to us—home, bread and butter, and a roof over our heads. I'm ashamed to call you my son. (*Hits table.*) By God, that money's mine; and I'll take it home with me if I have to steal it.

(*Voices sound in hall.*)

STONE. Dad, not so loud. They'll hear you.

MR. S. Let them hear. Call them in and tell them what we're talking about.

(*Sound of voices near entrance.*)

STONE (*quickly, motions to door*). Quick, Dad, in there.

MR. S. (*dropping hand, pauses, takes step toward L. entrance*). My God, so you're ashamed of your Dad?

STONE (*motioning*). Quick.

(MR. S. *hangs head. Exit, L. entrance.*)

Enter WIL., main entrance, in football suit.

WIL. Did I leave my head-guard here, Budd? Scrimmage this afternoon.

STONE. I think I saw it on your bureau.

[*Exit WIL., R. entrance.*

Enter WIL., R., with head-guard.

WIL. (*pausing*). Who was the old fogy?

STONE. Just a man to see me. He wanted some money. He's gone now.

WIL. Anything I can do?

STONE (*glancing toward L. entrance*). No, I guess I'll tidy up the room a bit for to-night. So long, Ted.

WIL. Well, I'll see you later. (*Looks at STONE queerly.*) So-long.

(*Exit, main entrance. STONE watches him go, waits a moment, goes to main entrance, looks out of door. Walks slowly to L. entrance. Exit, L. entrance.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I.—*The same. Time—Evening of the same day.*

(Curtain discovers REN. and PEA. sitting at table.)

REN. *(fondling pile of Necco Sweets ; opens algebra book on table ; reads).* Find the value of ——— *(Mumbles an algebra problem. Takes up Necco wafer. Reads formula aloud.)* You see, Fatty, there is the formula. All I have to do is to put it on paper and work the thing out.

PEA. Didn't Johnny say that your working principles were weak ?

REN. Oh, you leave that to me. I'm strong on principles. My uncle once was the principal of a high school.

PEA. Pretty soon you'll be saying that you don't mind getting stuck out ; but you're doing this just for the principle of the thing.

REN. I am.

PEA. You're a darned hypocrite. You mind getting stuck out about as much as I'd mind losing my mind. *(Slaps REN. on back.)* Some joke, hey, kid ?

REN. *(dryly).* You can't lose what you haven't got. *(Rises.)* I'll tell you what you could spare, though—a little flesh. Do you know, I never knew the advantage of being skinny until I met you. You look like a hard-boiled egg.

PEA. Well, there's one good thing about a hard-boiled egg, anyhow. It can't be beat.

REN. Say, you ought to send that joke to a magazine. *(Goes to table, takes candies and places them in different pockets of his coat and vest.)* Do you notice, Peanut, that I'm wearing a vest to-night ? I hope the darn candies don't rattle.

PEA. Oh, if they do, Johnny'll think they're your brains.

REN. *(ignoring thrust).* Say, who are you going to bring to-night ?

PEA. *(proudly).* Oh, my partner is the belle of the city.

(Struts around.)

REN. Who ? Katy Moonface ?

PEA. No. Listen, boy; to-night I will have the honor of cutting you out. Last year you went to see her, but after the second time you didn't go again. She hasn't been the same since.

REN. Who is she, Geraldine Harris?

PEA. Right. (*Raises hand tragically. Sings to tune of "Sweet Adelaide."*) Oh, Geraldine. My Geraldine!

(*Holds hands up tragically.*)

REN. So you're bringing that lemon? Well, I'll eat my hat.

PEA. You got mixed up in your fruit. She ain't a lemon, she's a peach.

REN. Well, go ahead and take her. What are you going to talk about?

PEA. Talk about? Why—er—about her—and me.

(*Taps himself on chest.*)

REN. Some conversation you'll have. But say, Peanut, I went to see that girl twice, and I haven't even kissed her yet.

PEA. Who do you think she is, Nellie the Beautiful Cloak Model? But honestly, Bill, she's all right, isn't she?

REN. Yes, I guess she is; only she's too stuck up. She thinks that she und Gott und der Kaiser rule the world. I'd give almost anything to be able to shock her just for once. (*Slowly.*) Do you know, if I got stuck out, I think I'd go to see her, and do that little thing.

PEA. What little thing?

REN. Shock her.

PEA. How?

REN. Oh, hold her hand or something. (*Bell rings.*) There's Johnny, Peanut. Make a noise like an egg and beat it.

PEA. You can't beat a hard-boiled egg. But nevertheless, I'll go. Good luck. Save me some of that crib, will you?

(*REN. pats pockets hurriedly; sits in chair by table, book in hand.*)

Enter WIL. and PROF., main entrance. Latter has papers.

WIL. Here is Professor Miller, Bill.

REN. (*rising, offers hand*). Good-evening, Professor.

[*Exeunt PEA. and WIL., main entrance.*]

PROF. Good-evening, Mr. Rendall. You are ready to take the examination, I trust?

REN. (*patting pockets*). All ready, sir.

PROF. I shall give you eight examples which, I believe, thoroughly cover the work done last term. You will be given an hour in which to finish. Is there any especial place you would like to sit?

REN. (*going to far side of table*). I generally study here. I think I can work better in this seat.

PROF. That is perfectly acceptable to me. Have you a pen?

REN. (*taking fountain pen from vest pocket*). Yes, sir.

PROF. (*laying papers on table, gives REN. blue book*). You know the conditions of the examination, I believe?

REN. Yes, sir. (*Whimsically.*) I have taken them before.

PROF. (*selecting paper*). Here are the questions.

REN. (*taking paper, does not look at it*). Professor Miller, I can generally work better with a pipe in my mouth. Do you mind if I smoke?

PROF. (*after a short pause*). I believe, Mr. Rendall, that such action would be against the college rules. I prefer that you do not.

REN. (*taking four unmarked Necco wafers from his pocket*). Do you mind if I nibble a candy, sir? They are Necco Sweets.

PROF. (*smiling*). I have no objection to that.

REN. (*taking paper, reads it over, smiles to himself*). I think I can just about pass this, sir.

PROF. I trust you can. (*Short pause.*) If you wish, you may remove your coat and vest. It is rather warm this evening.

REN. (*starting*). Why—er—I guess this is all right, sir.

(*Looks embarrassed.*)

PROF. I thought probably you would be more comfortable without a coat.

REN. I thank you, but I guess I'm better the way I am.

(*Takes up pen, scans paper. PROF. walks to the opposite wall; looks at picture, L. C. REN. slips a Necco from his pocket. Looks at it. Shakes head. Slips candy into his mouth. PROF. looks around. REN. scratches head, looks at paper. PROF. takes out watch, looks at it, stands a moment irresolutely.*)

PROF. Mr. Rendall, Dr. Thompson, a classmate of mine, is in the lower room. I am going down to talk with him. You will continue your work as if I were here. (*Walks to door; stops, turns and looks squarely at REN. Slowly.*) I place you on your honor, sir. [*Exit at main entrance.*]

REN. (*dropping pen, looks at door*). Well, what do you know about that! The darned lobster. (*Takes up pen. Looks at blue book. Takes up question paper. Reads.*) A freely falling body falls approximately 16 feet the first second and in each second thereafter 32 feet more than in the preceding second. A stone dropped from the top of a tower strikes the ground in four seconds. How high is the tower, and how far did the stone fall the last second? (*Takes Necco from pocket. Reads.*)
$$S = \frac{n}{2} (a + \frac{n-1}{2} a)$$
 Well, I'll be darned; there's the formula for that example. (*Drops pen on table. Holds Necco in hand, looks at it. Puts Necco on table. Places chin in hand, looks into the distance. Reaches for pipe. Fills it with tobacco. Lights it. Puffs. Takes up pen and starts to write. Stops. Puts pen down again. Takes up Necco. Reads.*)
$$S = \frac{1}{4} n (a + \frac{n-1}{2} a)$$
 (*Lays down candy. Gets up. Walks length of room. Makes gesture.*) Gosh darn it. (*Takes candies out of various pockets. Lays them on table. Takes waste basket from under the table. Picks up first Necco. Looks at it. Breaks it in half. Drops it deliberately in basket. Takes other candies. Drops them slowly in basket. Places basket under table. Speaks disconsolately.*) Now I am stuck. (*Picks up pen. Opens book to first page. Writes. Reads aloud.*) I pledge my honor as a gentleman that I have neither given nor received aid during this examination. (*Short pause.*) I wonder if this is what he means by the college spirit. (*Looks off into distance.*)

CURTAIN

(*Curtain denotes passing of forty minutes.*)

SCENE 2.—*The same. Time—Forty minutes later.*

(*Curtain discovers PEA. and GERALDINE HARRIS in room. PEA. standing, GER. playing piano idly.*)

PEA. Can you play "Sweet Adeline," Miss Harris?

(*Looks at her longingly.*)

GER. (*haughtily*). I really do not consider it worth while to learn ragtime, Mr. Jones.

PEA. (*placing hand on forehead, as if struck*). Oh! (*Recovers.*) But that ain't ragtime, that's a good, old-fashioned song. I always think of you when I play that.

GER. (*raising brows*). Indeed.

PEA. (*confusedly*). Er—er—yes. (*Recovering, shivers.*) B-r-r-r. Gee, it's cold around here.

(*GER. turns away ; idly fingers keys.*)

Enter REN., main entrance.

REN. Hello, Peanut. (*Bows deeply to GER.*) Good-evening, Miss Harris. Rather warm to-night, isn't it? (*R. of piano.*)

GER. Good-evening, Mr. Bailey. Yes, it is rather warm.

(*Looks at PEA. PEA. fixes collar, looks uncomfortable.*)

REN. Peanut, did you hear about my exam? I am now a member of the College Aluminum Association.

PEA. What? Did you get stuck out?

REN. Right. Johnny, the old dub, stuck me.

PEA. And your crib?

REN. (*motioning PEA. to keep still, indicating GER.*). Yep, any man baby enough to get stuck in algebra ought to buy a crib. It was a pretty hard exam, though (*slowly*), the hardest I ever took.

PEA. Well, I'll be darned.

(*Glances at GER., who is watching him with disapproval. Quickly places hand over mouth.*)

GER. If you gentlemen will excuse me, I think I shall hunt up Zelda. She's up-stairs, I guess.

PEA. (*hurriedly*). Oh, don't go.

GER. (*as ZELDA SAUNDERS passes door, main entrance*). There she is now. I will see you later, Mr. Jones. Good-bye, Mr. Bailey. [*Exit, main entrance.*]

PEA. (*slowly*). I don't seem to be making much of a hit.

REN. Nobody ever does—with her.

PEA. (*enviously*). She smiled at you, all right.

REN. (*puffing out chest*). Oh, well ———

PEA. I guess she couldn't help it, though. I smile sometimes myself. (*Changes.*) But say, what about that exam? Did you really get stuck?

REN. Stuck higher'n a kite. Why, I didn't even try the darn thing.

PEA. What was the matter with your crib?

REN. Nothing. But do you know what Johnny Miller did? He gave me the questions, hung around for a minute and then went out. He said he was placing me on my honor. (*Gesture of hopelessness.*) So there you are.

PEA. Well, the dirty devil. Couldn't you do it without your crib?

REN. I don't know, I didn't try. If I had done it by myself and had passed, he might have thought I cheated.

PEA. So you're stuck out?

REN. (*sadly*). Yes, I'm stuck out.

PEA. (*brightening*). What did you do with the candies?

REN. I threw them away.

PEA. Well, that's what I call extravagance. A whole nickel wasted! And look at all the time we took copying those formulas!

(*To waste basket under table. Takes out candies. Eats them.*)

REN. Oh, well, Peanut, we should worry.

PEA. (*sadly*). Well, we both have our troubles. You're stuck out, and I've brought Geraldine Harris to the dance. I had to spend two dollars for a cab, too.

REN. (*suddenly*). By Jove, Peanut, what do you think?

PEA. I think I'll beat it back to Geraldine. It's time for the first dance.

REN. No, listen. Do you remember this afternoon when I said that if I got stuck out, how much I'd like to shock your girl?

PEA. Don't call her my girl. Yes, I remember.

REN. Well, I am stuck out. Why can't I do my little stunt to-night?

PEA. I don't know why you can't. (*Sadly.*) But it wouldn't take much to shock her. All you have to do is act natural.

REN. If I get in wrong it won't matter, because I'm going home. I'll never see her again, anyway.

PEA. Go ahead and shock her. What can I do to help along?

REN. You can do a lot. Give me a dance.

PEA. Who will I dance with then?

REN. Nobody. The girl I didn't bring ought to be grateful. She won't have to dance with you.

PEA. Well, you ain't any Vernon Castle yourself.

REN. I know it. But listen; I want to sit it out and shock her.

PEA. Where?

REN. Right here.

PEA. Can I ring in anywhere?

REN. You can look on if you hide in the other room.

PEA. All right, you can have the second dance. It's a go.

REN. Shake.

(They shake hands.)

PEA. Well, I have to go and tell Geraldine I've given you a dance. She'll probably be sore. *(Goes to main entrance. Meets STONE and ZEL.)* Good-evening.

[Exit, main entrance.]

STONE. How did you get along in your exam, Bill?

REN. Got stuck. I'm going home to-morrow.

STONE. That's hard luck. You know Miss Saunders, don't you?

REN. I've heard a good deal about Miss Saunders. I am pleased to meet you. *(ZEL. bows, offers him her hand.)* I'm going down-stairs and see if I can pick up a couple of dances. Have you any open, Budd?

STONE. Sorry, Bill, I'm all filled up.

REN. Well, I'm sorry, too. Whenever I want a dance with a nice girl, it's always that way. *(Smiles at ZEL.)* I'm pleased to have met you.

[Exit, main entrance.]

(ZEL. sits on sofa, STONE beside her.)

STONE. It's nice to see you again. It seems years since I've seen you.

ZEL. *(smiling)*. Two days. Have you forgotten that you were at my house Monday?

STONE *(frankly)*. No. Since then I haven't thought of anything else. *(Music plays "Barcarolle," to give effect of music down-stairs in the ballroom.)* There's the first dance. Do you mind sitting it out?

ZEL. Not with you, Budd.

STONE. They're playing "Oh, Night of Love." Whenever I hear that now, I'll think of you.

ZEL. Why?

STONE. Music like that always reminds me of you, anyhow. But to-night — ! It's the first time we've been alone since last June.

ZEL. And all this summer you've been up there in that big house of yours, swimming and boating, and talking to girls like this, haven't you, Budd?

STONE (*wincing*). No. I've been working, on the farm, all summer.

ZEL. (*indulgently*). You know you couldn't work like that, Budd. What would your father say?

STONE (*frowning*). My father? Oh, he wants me to work.

ZEL. (*earnestly*). I wonder, Budd, if you ever had any real work to do, how you would go about it? Supposing you were poor, and had to work. What would you do?

STONE. I don't know.

ZEL. I'm sure, though, you'd do something worth while. But first you'd have to wake up. You're drifting along, Budd.

STONE (*rising*). Let's not talk about me. Tell me what you've been doing. Have you had any crushes this summer?

ZEL. Don't be foolish, Budd. I met lots of boys, and I liked them all.

STONE (*walking to table, handles books, takes up object, puts it down again*). I guess you like every one, don't you?

ZEL. Almost every one.

STONE (*playing with object on table*). Do you like me?

ZEL. Why, of course I do.

STONE (*going to sofa, sits down, turns to girl*). Zelda, please don't be angry at what I'm going to say. (*Voice shakes slightly*.) You know, don't you, girl, that I've always been crazy about you? And to-night I can't help it, I simply have to tell you. I love you, I love you.

ZEL. Budd, please don't say anything more. You know that I like you lots and lots, but I don't think I love you—yet.

STONE (*interrupting, earnestly*). You can, though, I know you can; and I want you to more than anything in the world. There never was any one but you. (*Pause. Music downstairs plays "Oh, Night of Love."*) Listen, dear, this is *our* night. I want you so.

ZEL. Don't, Budd; it isn't time to say those things now.

We're both young, and maybe we don't know our minds. You're not ready yet to—to take care of a girl. Since you've been in college, you've had everything you want. You've been drifting along. I like you, Budd; I almost love you, but I can't do what you say until I know you better. Until you've proved that you can do something else but drift. (*Puts her hand in his.*) I'm sorry, Budd, but we'd better wait a while. Maybe you will change in a year or so.

STONE. I won't, I won't. I love you.

(*Reaches out his arms.*)

ZEL. (*putting up her hand*). No, Budd, not that.

(*Music stops.*)

STONE (*putting head in hands*). It's all over, I guess.

ZEL. Why, Budd? Can't we just be friends, and wait?

STONE. Yes, I suppose we'll have to. (*Earnestly.*) But if I only could prove to you that I can do things. Suppose I wasn't rich —

Enter PEA. and GER., main entrance. STONE looks up angrily.

PEA. Sorry to disturb you, but we're looking for Bill. Have you seen him?

STONE. He isn't in here. (*To GER.*) Good-evening, Geraldine; you're quite a stranger.

GER. Good-evening, Budd.

Enter REN., main entrance.

REN. I just told the band to play a fox-trot.

GER. Oh, I adore fox-trots.

REN. So do I; only I can't do them. (*Music starts fox-trot.* REN. to GER.) You don't mind if we sit this out, do you?

GER. Why, no.

STONE. Well, be good, Bill.

[*Exeunt* STONE and ZEL., main entrance.

PEA. I think I'll trot out of the door. I will see you young people later.

(*Bows. Exit, R. E.* GER. sits on sofa. REN. walks once up and down the room. Sits beside GER.)

REN. I'm sorry I don't fox-trot. I suppose you'd much rather dance than talk to me?

GER. Oh, no, I'm rather tired. In fact, I had the last dance with Mr. Jones.

(PEA. *looks out of door, R. E., and sticks out tongue.*)

REN. (*seeing* PEA.). Yes, he's pretty fat for a dancer.

GER. He is rather heavy.

REN. It's a shame to waste a nice girl like you on him. Now, if you had only come with me.

GER. (*demurely*). I might have, if you had asked me.

REN. Do you know, I was going to ask you. But I thought probably you'd rather go with Peanut.

GER. Oh, you mean Mr. Jones? How could you think such a thing?

(PEA. *looks out door, shakes fist.*)

REN. (*boldly*). You're some girl, Geraldine. You don't mind if I call you that, do you?

GER. (*coldly*). I had rather you would not. (*Changes.*) Oh, well, I believe I shall let you call me Geraldine (*coyly*) if I may call you Bill.

REN. Call me William.

GER. Why not Bill?

REN. Why, you see it would be different. Everybody calls me Bill, but you're not like any one else.

GER. All right, William, I will.

REN. It sounds like a coachman, but I guess that doesn't matter.

GER. You came to see me once or twice last year. Didn't you have a good time?

REN. Sure. (*Then suddenly.*) I think you're a peach.

GER. (*with dignity*). Why—I'm not accustomed to being spoken to like that.

REN. (*laughing*). I don't speak to many girls that way, but gee! I have an awful crush on you.

GER. (*suddenly changing attitude*). Why, William!

REN. (*reaching for GER.'s hand; aside*). Now for the shock. (*To GER.*) You don't mind if I hold your hand, do you?

GER. (*looking puzzled*). Why—er—(*giving him her hand*) not if it's you, William.

(PEA. looks through R. E. and applauds silently. REN. holds hand awkwardly.)

REN. I think you had better call me Willie. (*Awkward pause.*) Say, I didn't know you were like this.

GER. I'm not, generally. Do you know, you're the first boy who's ever held my hand.

REN. (*sadly*). Yes, I guess I am.

GER. Do you really like me lots—Willie? (PEA., from R. E., laughs loudly. REN. and GER. start. REN. drops hand.) Oh, what was that?

REN. (*sitting again*). That was only Peanut. He's in next door. You don't need to worry about him.

GER. Wouldn't it have been awful if he'd seen us holding hands? He might have thought we were engaged.

REN. (*confusedly*). Do you know, I thought you'd be sore.

GER. No, not with you, Bill. I think I like that name best.

REN. (*disconsolately*). Willie is the best name for me.

GER. (*placing hand in REN.'s*). You know we shouldn't hold hands unless we're engaged.

REN. (*starting to feet*). You don't mean to say you like me, do you?

GER. Why, of course I do. Let's go somewhere; just us two.

REN. I think we're gone already.

(*Sound of PEA. singing in next room, "Oh, the High Cost of Loving."* Enter PEA., R. E. GER. looks at him angrily.)

PEA. (*winking at REN.*). Did you sit out all this dance, Bill?

REN. Yes. (*Turns to GER.*) We had lots of fun, didn't we?

GER. Yes, indeed. (*Enter MRS. BROWNLEY, STONE and ZEL., main entrance.*) Good-evening, Mrs. Brownley.

MRS. B. Good-evening.

STONE (*to GER.*). The next is my dance, isn't it, Geraldine?

PEA. (*intervening, dance card in hand*). Yes, I believe it is.

(*Music, "Blue Danube," starts up.*)

GER. (*offering hand to REN.*). Good-bye, Bill.

REN. (*taking hand*). Good-night. (STONE *offers GER. his arm. Exeunt in company with MRS. B. and PEA., main entrance.*) Have you this dance, Miss Saunders?

ZEL. Yes, thank you, I have it with Mr. Willis.

REN. I'll find him for you. [*Exit, main entrance.*]

(ZEL. *walks around room. Goes to STONE's desk. Takes up picture of herself. Looks at it.*)

Enter WIL., main entrance.

WIL. Oh, here you are. I've been looking all over for you.

ZEL. Is this the picture I gave you, or is it Budd's?

WIL. It's Budd's. I keep mine in there (*indicating R. E.*), where no one can see it.

ZEL. Why?

WIL. I don't think it's right to hang your picture where every one can look at it.

ZEL. Budd does.

WIL. Yes, but maybe it's different with him. (*Short pause.*) Do you mind if we sit out this dance?

ZEL. I was just going to suggest it.

(WIL. *walks to table. ZEL. sits on chair, R. C.*)

WIL. (*playing idly with book*). How long have we known each other, Zelda?

ZEL. Since you were in Prep School; six years, I guess.

WIL. And I only have one more year in Collegeville. I wonder if I'll see you much after graduation.

ZEL. I hope so.

WIL. Do you think you'll miss me?

ZEL. Of course I will.

WIL. (*walking length of room, slowly*). I wonder if you know how much I'll miss you.

ZEL. Oh, don't let's talk about that now. We have a whole year yet.

WIL. And this year will you let me see you lots and lots?

ZEL. I expect to be pretty busy, Ted, but you know you're always welcome.

WIL. Budd and I just about monopolized you last year, didn't we?

ZEL. Yes, I guess you did.

WIL. And before that I had you all to myself. (*Pause. Sound of music playing "The Blue Danube."*) Do you remember the first dance in my Freshman year? They played "The Blue Danube" then, and I had the waltz with you.

ZEL. Yes, it was when the "Boston" was all the rage. Do you remember those long glides, Ted? (*Pause.*)

WIL. I always remember everything that has to do with you. (*Goes suddenly to couch; sits down, facing girl.*) Zelda, I'm not much at saying things, but you must know how—what I think about you. This summer, in the mountains—

ZEL. (*interrupting*). Don't, Ted. Wait a moment, I want to tell you something.

WIL. I don't want to hear it. Listen, girl.

ZEL. No, not now. Wait until I tell you what I have to say.

WIL. Zelda, won't you listen to me?

ZEL. It's about Budd. (*Pause.*) To-night he asked me to marry him, and I told him no. (*WIL. starts forward.*) But listen! Ted, I love him, although I wouldn't tell him so. And now I want you to help me. He is rich; he has never had any problems to solve, and I'm not sure that he could face a big thing and win out. So I told him to wait. I want him to prove himself a real man (*then softly*) like you are, Ted.

WIL. (*putting head in hands, rises, walks length of floor; faces girl*). He must be a real man, or he couldn't have made you care for him.

ZEL. Thank you, Ted.

WIL. (*steadily*). You must know, now, that I care more for you than for anything in the world. But we must forget that. I've roomed with Budd for three years, and I know him well. Take him, girl; you won't make a mistake.

ZEL. (*rising*). And this won't change things with us? May I still count you the best friend I have?

WIL. Yes, the best friend you have.

(*ZEL. offers hand. WIL. takes it in firm grip of friendship.*)

Enter STONE and PEA., main entrance.

STONE. Oh, I beg your pardon. (*Looks suspicious.*)

WIL. (*dropping ZEL.'s hand*). It's all right, Budd. Zelda and I were just sealing a compact. We've agreed to be the best of friends.

STONE. Would you like to take a walk before the next dance, Zelda?

ZEL. Yes, if Ted will excuse me.

WIL. Certainly. I thank you for that dance.

ZEL. And I thank you. (*Offers her hand. They shake.*)
Good-bye, Ted. [*Exeunt STONE and ZEL., main entrance.*]

(*WIL. goes to table, takes cigarette. Lights it. PEA. sits on couch.*)

WIL. Peanut, have you ever felt as if nothing that you do counts for anything? (*Sits on corner of table.*)

PEA. Yes, that's generally the way I feel.

WIL. No, quit fooling. Have you ever felt as if you didn't give a care what happened, as if you couldn't get anything at all worth while?

PEA. No. Why?

WIL. Oh, nothing. Only that's the way I feel now.

PEA. I don't see what you're crabbing about. You're football captain, President of the Senior class, and lots of things. You haven't any right to feel that way; you always get everything you want.

WIL. No, not everything, Peanut.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*The same. Time—2:30 A. M.*

(*WIL. and STONE sitting in room smoking.*)

STONE. Some dance, Ted?

WIL. Yes. Every one had a good time, I guess.

STONE. How about the girls? Did you get a crush?

WIL. No, not a crush; I'm too old for that.

(*Short pause.*)

STONE (*leaning forward, pipe in hand*). Listen, Ted. Tonight I proposed to Zelda.

WIL. I know. She said so.

STONE. What, she told you?

WIL. Yes. (*Softly.*) I've known her for a long time, Budd.

STONE (*examining pipe*). So she told you? I wonder why?

WIL. (*frankly*). Because I asked her to marry me.

STONE (*looking up*). What!

WIL. (*calmly*). She said that she liked me lots, but that she didn't love me, and never could.

STONE. Do you know what she said to me?

WIL. Yes, a little.

STONE. She said that she didn't love me yet; that I was rich and lazy, and drifting along.

WIL. (*leaning forward, hands on knees, looking at STONE*). She told me she *does* love you.

STONE. Gad, if she does!

WIL. But she wants you to buckle down and do something worth while. Why don't you, Budd?

STONE. I'm going to, Ted. (*Stands up.*) Why, I'd do anything at all for her. (*Walks over to desk, takes picture, looks at it.*) She's only a kid, and she isn't so very pretty—but, Ted, what a girl to have! (*Looks at picture a minute, places it back on desk, walks to fireplace. Changes tone.*) I'm going to bed.

WIL. (*rising*). Budd, if I can ever do anything to help you, let me know. You and Zelda are the two best friends I have. (*Holds out hand. They shake.*) Good-night.

STONE (*R. of table*). Thank you, Ted. (*Short pause, both embarrassed. STONE takes keys and purse out of coat. Places them on table. Throws coat on chair.*) Good-night, Ted. [Exit, L. E.]

(WIL. *puts head in hand. Silence. Enter REN., main entrance, coat and collar off. WIL. sits quietly in chair. REN. claps him on back.*)

REN. Hello, Ted, old scout. What are you mooning about?

WIL. Nothing. Is it true that you flunked your exam?

REN. Yes. Didn't you hear? (*Sits on sofa.*)

WIL. I heard you got stuck. What was the trouble?

REN. Johnny, the old duck, went out of the room, and I couldn't crib. It was a case of honor among thieves. (*Simply.*) I handed in a blank paper.

WIL. (*rising*). I'm sorry you're stuck out, Bill, but I'm glad it was that way. I think that was the best exam you ever took.

REN. (*confusedly*). Ah ! cut it out. Wait till I tell you something funny.

Enter PEA., main entrance, coat off, struggling with collar.

PEA. Ah-choo. (*Sneezes.*)

(REN. and WIL. *start.*)

REN. Gesundheit. Every time Peanut sneezes I think of a street sprinkler.

PEA. (*soberly*). Some hot ! I feel like a pickled chestnut.

REN. Every time I look at you I think of a square meal. Got anything to eat?

PEA. You don't want anything to eat. You're in love. (*To WIL.*) Did you hear about Bill's proposal?

WIL. What did he propose, a trip down-town ?

PEA. No. The poor boob made love to my girl. He thought he was going to shock her, and the dame fell for it.

WIL. What ! Geraldine Harris ?

PEA. Yes ; she's got a crush on Dick. Just imagine a girl having a crush on him.

REN. Honest, Ted, I never thought —

PEA. (*interrupting*). You're right, you never thought. If you started to think, you'd get a headache.

REN. Give it a rest, Peanut. (*To WIL.*) I told her she was a peach, and now —

PEA. And now you're the lemon.

WIL. Well, that's too bad, Bill; what are you going to do?

REN. Do? To-morrow I beat it home. Thank goodness I don't live in town.

(*Short pause. WIL. yawns.*)

WIL. Well, good-night, you fellows. Roll along, Fatty.

PEA. Well, good-night. Come on, wife.

[*Exeunt REN. and PEA., main entrance.*]

(*WIL. rises, turns down light, walks around room aimlessly. Goes to piano, fondles keys, and sings softly, "Oh, Night of Love." Stops, goes over to STONE'S desk, takes picture of ZEL., looks at it a minute, puts it back, walks slowly to bedroom, R. E., singing softly. Singing dies away, curtains of main entrance move. MR. S. looks through door, comes in softly, goes to R. E., listens, turns on light, stands a moment undecidedly, goes to STONE'S coat, hurriedly searches pockets, goes to table, sees keys, nervously tries keys in desk, opens top drawer, searches hurriedly, finds roll of bills, holds money in hand. WIL. appears in R. E.*)

WIL. Well?

MR. S. (*starting back*). My God!

WIL. (*walking to main entrance*). One move from you and I rouse the house. Who are you, anyhow?

MR. S. I—I'm a thief, I guess. Here, take the money (*holding out bills*) and let me go.

WIL. (*grimly*). The place for a man like you is in the lock-up. That's where you belong.

MR. S. (*beseechingly*). No—no, not there.

WIL. (*suddenly*). I've seen you before, I think. You were the man who wanted money from my roommate this morning.

MR. S. (*with a touch of dignity*). I was here then. I simply asked for something that belonged to me.

WIL. Where did you meet Stone?

MR. S. Why—at home. I come from the same place he does.

WIL. And you came down here just to see him?

MR. S. No, sir. That is—I—I know his people.

WIL. (*suddenly*). This thing doesn't look right to me. I'm going to 'phone for a cop. Your answers are too evasive.

MR. S. No, sir. No, not that. Let me go. I won't ever bother you again. I ain't so young now. You must have a father yourself.

WIL. Do you know that there are girls in the other part of this house, and that if they saw you they'd be frightened to death? A man who steals money ought to be punished. I'm going to 'phone. (*Takes receiver from hook*. MR. S. *rushes suddenly toward the door*. WIL. *jumps from 'phone, bars way, seizes MR. S. by the wrist*.) None of that. You get over there in the corner.

(*Forces MR. S. into chair, backs toward telephone, takes receiver from hook*.)

MR. S. (*desperately*). Don't. God, boy, wait a moment.

WIL. (*putting back receiver; shortly*). We'll decide this thing here and now. It's Stone's money. (*Points to L. E.*) We'll let him decide.

MR. S. (*proudly*). No, not him.

WIL. Stand up. (*MR. S. rises*.) Open that door.

(*Points to L. E.*)

MR. S. (*raising right hand, drops it suddenly, faces WIL.*). No, I can't. (*Appealingly*.) Boy, you don't know what you're doing.

WIL. I'll give you thirty seconds to open that door. If you don't open it by then, I'll phone to the police.

MR. S. I can't do it; I won't.

(*Silence*. WIL. *takes out watch*; MR. S. *stands at door, hands by his side*.)

WIL. Fifteen seconds—twenty-five—— (*MR. S. turns away, passes hand over brow*.) The time is up. I'm going to 'phone the police station. (*Walks to 'phone. Puts hand on receiver. Turns to MR. S.*) Are you going to waken Stone in there?

MR. S. (*sinking into chair*). My God, boy. I can't do it. He's my son.

WIL. (*dropping hand from receiver*). What! Your son?

MR. S. (*bitterly*). Yes. That boy in there (*motioning to L. E.*) is my son.

WIL. And you? You'd steal from him?

MR. S. No—er—er—you don't understand. Here's the money (*holding out roll of bills*); let me go.

WIL. (*cynically*). I don't believe you. Your story is too impossible. Mr. Stone is a rich man. Almost a millionaire.

MR. S. He ain't. He's poor.

WIL. (*motioning MR. S. into a seat*). Sit down. We'd better fix this right now. (*MR. S. sits in chair. WIL. walks to table, leans against it.*) You say you are Mr. Stone?

MR. S. Yes.

WIL. Then what are you doing here stealing money from your son?

MR. S. I'm not stealing it. It's mine.

WIL. There's something queer about this.

MR. S. (*rising suddenly, talks directly to WIL.*). I've got a son in there who is a coward, and a liar. The Stones ain't rich; never were rich (*voice rising*), and for ten years the mother and me have sacrificed ourselves that he might get this education. We've worn poor clothes, and she has stinted and scraped and scrubbed just for that boy in there. We saved some, but the money I just sent down to Budd is needed up home. If we don't get that four hundred dollars, the place will be sold. This morning I asked my boy for the money and he refused it. That's why I'm here. The money is mine, mine, and I have a right to take it.

WIL. (*wonderingly*). He wouldn't give the money back to you?

MR. S. No. I asked him for the sake of his mother, and he refused. He said he loves a girl, and she wouldn't have nothing to do with him unless he is rich. (*Bitterly.*) What kind of girls do you have down here, anyway?

WIL. So that's what Budd said? He did it for the girl?

MR. S. Yes, sir, for her. He went back on his folks because he was afraid to have her know how poor he is.

WIL. (*slowly*). So Budd's poor?

(*Fingers book aimlessly.*)

MR. S. (*pleadingly*). Let me go.

WIL. Wait a moment. Listen, Mr. Stone, I believe you. Does Budd know how much you need the money?

MR. S. Yes, he knows. But it's the girl. She's turned him from us.

WIL. Don't put the blame on her. She's as good and

square as any one who ever lived. If he'd asked her she'd tell him to give back the money and go home. I know (*softly*) because I love her.

MR. S. What! (*Short pause.*) And the girl?

WIL. She's in love with him. She told me so.

MR. S. (*suspiciously*). And now, if you let them all know that I'm a thief, she'll see what a coward he is, and she'll throw him over for you.

WIL. No. You're not a thief. This matter of money can be fixed up all right. I can lend it to you myself if it comes to a pinch. But as for the girl, she loves your son, and she must never know what a coward he's been.

MR. S. What! You'd protect him and give up your own chance? Why?

WIL. (*earnestly*). Yes, Mr. Stone, and I'll tell you why. When I came down here four years ago, I didn't know what college meant. I thought one studied and had a good time, and then forgot. But studies are only one factor to most of us. At first we don't think much of college spirit, but along in the Junior year we begin to glimpse the real meaning of a college; we learn to love its traditions, and we begin to feel that what the college wants more than anything is to teach her students to be men. And the fellow who falls down and doesn't do the right thing isn't living up to the spirit of the college. That's the big thing I've learned down here. That's why I'm going to stand by you, and give Budd in there a chance to be a real man.

MR. S. And Budd? Does he feel that, too?

WIL. He doesn't realize what he's doing. But he's been here for three years, and I think in the end he'll come out right. (*Goes to table, takes money.*) You'd better go now. I'll keep this money; Budd must fight the thing out by himself. Don't worry about your home. Try to see Budd tomorrow, and if he still refuses come to me, and I'll arrange a loan. But remember, this affair is between you and me. Good-night, sir. (*Offers hand.*)

MR. S. (*taking hand; slowly*). And you and him are rivals!

WIL. No, not rivals—college men and friends.

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE.—*The same. Time—morning.*

(*Curtain discovers stage empty. Enter REN., main entrance, carrying suit-case. Goes to L. E. and leaves bag.*)

REN. (*stretching*). Oh, hum! (*Looks around room, walks over to ZEL.'s picture. Takes it up and looks at it.*) Some girl!

(*Places picture back. Walks to Victrola, R. C. Takes out one-step record. Starts Victrola. Picks up drum-sticks. Drums on arm of chair.*)

Enter STONE from L. E.

STONE. Hello, Bill. Cut it out. You'll wake up the house.

REN. (*continuing drumming, sings*). Ta, la la, tra, la la.

STONE (*walking to Victrola, shuts off record*). Anybody up yet?

REN. Yes, I am.

STONE. Any one else?

REN. (*with exaggerated sweetness*). Your lady friend has not appeared as yet. Neither has mine. (*Sits on table.*)

STONE. Yours?

REN. Yes, mine. Geraldine and I have had an affair of our own.

-STONE. What! You and Geraldine?

REN. Yes, me and Geraldine. Last night I told her she was a peach, and she thought I meant it.

STONE. Well, I'll be darned. What are you going to do?

REN. I'm going home. There's my bag.

STONE. Going home already? Are you really stuck?

REN. I'm worse than a postage stamp that's just been licked.

STONE. Didn't the crib work?

REN. (*shortly*). No. (*To L. C.*)

STONE. What was the matter?

REN. (*impatiently*). Oh, nothing. I just didn't use it, that's all.

STONE. I knew old Johnny would keep his eyes open. What did he do, sit right beside you?

REN. He went out of the room.

STONE (*wonderingly*). He did? And you got stuck rather than crib?

REN. Yes! Any decent fellow would have done the same thing. (*Pause.*)

STONE. I'm sorry you're going home, Bill. We'll miss you lots.

REN. I'll miss the bunch, too. It's going to be hard to leave the old college. (*Sits on sofa.*)

STONE. Yes, I imagine it would be mighty hard. (*Pause.*) Ted up yet? (*Down R., then up C.*)

REN. Yes, down-stairs.

STONE. Guess I'll go down. Got a cigarette?

REN. No, but I've got a Fatima. (*Offers package.* STONE *takes one and lights it.*) How about that affair of yours, Budd?

STONE (*looking up*). You mean the money? It's still unsettled.

REN. Have you heard from your Dad?

STONE (*after a brief pause*). No.

REN. I've been thinking it over since yesterday, Budd. Have you decided what to do yet?

STONE. No! Well—I don't know whether I have or not.

REN. (*slowly*). Don't be angry, Budd, but it seems to me that there's only one thing to do. You ought to send back the money.

STONE (*directly*). Do you always do what you ought?

REN. Not always—but in a pinch, yes.

STONE. I suppose you mean last night. But it was different with you. It just meant leaving college. With me it means—(*hands outstretched*) everything.

REN. I don't think it does. Even if the girl should turn you down, you'd get over it.

STONE. You don't know, Bill. Why, I'd do anything for her.

REN. You mean almost anything.

STONE (*impatiently*). Oh, you can't understand. (*To R.*) I'm wrong, I know, but I'm going to stick it out down here. There must be some way of raising money.

REN. Oh, well, do what you like, Budd. (*Bell rings.*) There's the bell. It's a wonder some of the fellows wouldn't bring their keys along.

STONE. I'll see who it is. (*Starts up c.*)

REN. Don't bother; Ted's down-stairs.

Enter WIL. and PROF., main entrance.

WIL. Professor Miller to see you, Bill.

REN. (*rising*). Good-morning, sir.

PROF. Good-morning, Mr. Rendall. (*Nods to STONE. Exeunt STONE and WIL., main entrance.*) I happened to be passing, so I thought I would speak to you about your examination.

REN. Thank you, sir. Of course I'm stuck?

(*Both down L.*)

PROF. Yes. Couldn't you answer any of the questions?

REN. I didn't try.

PROF. So I perceived. As yet I do not understand your action. Did you consider the examination a fair one?

REN. Yes. The questions were fair enough. (*Frankly.*) I just couldn't answer them, that was all.

PROF. I thought that possibly you had some definite reason for submitting a blank paper. Was I correct?

REN. Yes, sir.

PROF. And does the fault lie with me?

REN. Well, Professor, if you had done what I expected you to do, everything would have been all right. But you didn't.

PROF. I wish, Mr. Rendall, that you would speak more plainly. I shall make whatever amends possible.

REN. The only one to blame is myself. I'm too darned conscientious. (*Quickly.*) I beg your pardon, sir.

PROF. No man who obeys his conscience can go far wrong. (*Rises.*) However, I exceedingly regret that you must leave college.

REN. I have exactly the same sentiments. But before you go, Dr. Miller, I would like to say something. (*Short pause.*) Yesterday I told you that I didn't think all professors square, that sometimes they stick a fellow on general principles. I take that back.

PROF. Thank you, Mr. Rendall. I am sure, at least, that you can consider me your best friend and well-wisher.

REN. I do, sir. You're a good, square man. If you weren't, I'd be in college now.

PROF. (*taking step nearer REN.*). Would you mind explaining, Mr. Rendall?

REN. I don't suppose it would make any difference now if you do know. Sit down, sir. (*Motions to chair. PROF. sits L. of table. REN. on sofa.*) Before the exam last night I had a crib made out. (*Enthusiastically.*) It was a peach of a crib—Necco Sweets. (*Seriously.*) I was going to crib my way through the exam; I could have done it easily, but you went out of the room and placed me on my honor, so I flunked out.

PROF. (*rising*). Mr. Rendall, I congratulate you.

REN. (*abashed*). Oh! It doesn't call for congratulations, sir. I told you yesterday that if a Prof. is square, the students will do the right thing. You said something then about the spirit of the college. It may have been that, or it may have been my conscience, but anyhow, I didn't crib, and I'm stuck out.

PROF. (*looking at watch*). Mr. Rendall, it is now ten o'clock. Final marks must be submitted in two hours. If you wish to come to my room and take the examination again, I shall give you another chance. Last night's list we may simply regard as no examination.

REN. I thank you, sir, but it wouldn't be the square thing to do. You gave me a fair chance and I fell down. (*Pause.*) But it's pretty decent of you to make the offer, and I appreciate it, sir.

PROF. You have my sincere admiration and respect, Mr. Rendall. We want men like you in college. It is to be regretted that you will not graduate.

REN. That's just what my father'll say. I'm going home this morning.

PROF. And will you tell your parents the circumstances connected with this examination?

REN. No, sir.

PROF. I shall make it a point to inform your father that, although in a sense you failed, in reality you passed the final test—with honor.

(*Sound outside door, main entrance. PEA. singing, out of tune, "The sun shines bright in my old Kentucky home."*
He enters, main entrance.)

PEA. (*starting back*). Oh!

PROF. Good-morning, Mr. Jones. (*To REN.*) Well, I must be going, Mr. Rendall. I wish you the best of success.

(*Offers hand.*)

REN. Thank you, sir.

(*Shakes PROF.'s hand. PEA. stands aside. Exit PROF., main entrance. PEA. looks out of door, main entrance.*)

PEA. Johnny's been bawling you out?

REN. No. He said he was sorry I was going home.

PEA. Did you tell him why you flunked?

REN. Yes.

PEA. What did he say?

REN. He offered to give me another exam.

PEA. He did? Well, the old duck. When are you going to take it?

REN. I'm not going to take it.

PEA. What!

REN. There ain't goin' to be no reëxam. I'm going home.

PEA. Oh, say, Bill, take the blamed thing. I'll have a rotten time if you're not around.

REN. No, it'll be a good thing for you, Peanut. (*Half soberly.*) Take a bit of advice from an old alumnus, and stick in college. It pays.

PEA. Well, why don't you take the exam and stick yourself then?

REN. I couldn't stick myself. It would be up to Johnny to do that, but I'm not going to take the darned exam, because it wouldn't be square.

PEA. And you're going home?

REN. Yes! And just wait until I tell my Dad. (*To R.*)

PEA. Did you read that poem in the paper last week? (*Up C. Assumes dramatic attitude.*) "Stick, dog-gone the luck, I thought I knew the truck." I wrote that. (*Taps chest.*)

REN. I wouldn't brag about it. (*Over to sofa.*)

PEA. And know what I did yesterday afternoon? I wrote a poem about Geraldine.

REN. It must have been some poem.

PEA. It was; but it won't do me any good now. I'm going to turn it over to you.

REN. I don't want the blamed thing.

PEA. Sure you do; you can read it to her. (*To sofa. Assumes voice and attitude of GER.*) Do you like me lots, Willie?

REN. (*jumping up*). Cut it out.

PEA. Wait a minute. Wait till you hear the poem. I'll read it.

REN. Don't you dare.

PEA. (*taking crumpled paper from pocket, reads*).

“Little girl of the coal black eyes,
Rosy lips and tender sighs.”

REN. Tender size. Yes, she is pretty small.

PEA. Sighs, you boob, sighs! (*Sighs deeply.*) Like that.

REN. For the love of Mike, Peanut, tie a can to it.

PEA. (*with dignity*). Just a minute, just a minute. I wrote ten new lines this morning. (*Reads.*) William speaks:

“Dear, though I know it must sound silly,
I like you lots when you call me Willie.”

REN. Git! (*Takes pillow, throws it at PEA. PEA. retreats to door, main entrance. Sticks head through curtains.*) Here's Geraldine, William. (*Steps aside.*)

Enter GER., main entrance.

GER. (*frowning at PEA., walks to R.*). Good-morning, Bill.

(*Offers hand.*)

REN. Good-morning. (*To R.*)

PEA. (*advancing into room*). I see you got up before breakfast.

GER. (*shortly*). Yes. (*To REN.*) Did you sleep well, Bill?

REN. You bet your life I did. Didn't dream a single thing.

GER. Oh! I thought perhaps you'd dreamed —

PEA. Didn't you dream about Geraldine?

REN. (*scowling*). No! not last night.

PEA. Neither did I.

GER. (*to PEA.*). Would you mind getting me a drink, Mr. Jones?

REN. Get me one, too, Peanut. (*PEA. starts R., hastily.*) And hurry back. [*Exit PEA., main entrance.*]

GER. What are we going to do all day, Bill? (*Down R.*)

REN. I'm going to ride in a train most of the time. A railroad train, you know, one of those things that runs along on tracks. The tracks —

(GER. at C., REN. to R.)

GER. (*interrupting*). Oh, Bill, you're not going away to-day?

REN. Yes, this morning. I'm stuck out of college.

GER. Yes, but you don't have to go so soon; and just—after last night, too.

REN. Yes, that's the reason I'm going—after last night. (GER. *draws away, hurt*.) Oh, I mean the exam. I took that last night, you know.

GER. Oh, Bill, I thought for a moment you meant me. But can't you stay here for a few days?

REN. Nope! My father is just dying to hear about that exam. He couldn't stand the suspense—neither could I.

GER. But surely I can see you soon? Up at your house, maybe?

REN. I don't know. It's a long way to Tipperary.

Enter PEA., with two glasses of water, main entrance.

PEA. Here's some H₂O, fresh from the old reservoir.

GER. (*with motion of exasperation*). Oh!

PEA. (*wearily handing GER. water; bows deeply*). Accept this with my deepest thanks. (*Hands REN. glass.*)

REN. (*holding glass*). Here's to better days. (*Drinks. Hands PEA. glass.*) Gee, that was good stuff. I knew it was water as soon as I tasted it.

Enter MRS. B. and ZEL., main entrance. Go down L.

MRS. B. Good-morning, Geraldine. Have you eaten yet?

GER. No, Mrs. Brownley. Is breakfast ready?

MRS. B. They are serving it now.

PEA. Me for down-stairs. (*Goes toward main entrance.*)

GER. Are you coming, Bill?

REN. Yes! This is my last meal in the old house.

(*Steps aside for GER. Exeunt REN., GER., and MRS. B., main entrance.*)

ZEL. (*lingering*). Have you seen Budd, Mr. Jones?

PEA. (*abashed*). I—I think he's down-stairs.

ZEL. Is Ted around?

PEA. Oh, yes! He's the big boss. He's probably down-stairs, too, seeing that the gang gets enough to eat. (ZEL. *sits on piano stool*.) Can't you play the pi-an-o, Miss Saunders?

ZEL. (*smiling*). No. Can you?

PEA. Nope! I can't play anything but the bugle. W-want to hear that?

ZEL. (*smiling*). Why, certainly.

PEA. I'll run down and get it.

(*Exit, main entrance. ZEL. walks around room. Plays idly with books on table.*)

Enter STONE, *main entrance.*

STONE. Good-morning, Zelda.

ZEL. Good-morning, Budd.

STONE. Have you had any breakfast yet?

ZEL. No! But I'd like some.

STONE. Do you mind waiting just a minute—here with me?

ZEL. No! Of course not. (STONE *touches* ZEL.'s *hand on table*.) Don't be foolish, Budd. Play "On the banks."

(STONE *goes to piano*.)

STONE (*sitting on stool*). I'd much rather talk, but listen. (*Plays softly*.) "Drink to me only with thine eyes."

(*Looks at ZEL.*)

Enter PEA., *main entrance, with cornet.*

PEA. (*standing in doorway, unnoticed*). H'm. (*No one notices him. He takes cornet, plays loudly, "I can't get him up."* ZEL. and STONE *start*.) That's taps. It means breakfast is ready.

ZEL. Oh, Mr. Jones, I forgot all about you.

PEA. Yep! Most everybody forgets about me. But you'd better hurry up or there won't be anything left to eat.

ZEL. All right. Come on, Budd.

[*Exeunt* ZEL. and STONE.]

PEA. (*going to piano, plays on cornet first lines of "Drink to me only with thine eyes"; puts cornet down*). Gee! I'd like to write a poem about her.

(*Exit, main entrance. Stage is vacant. From down-stairs quartette sings "Old Black Joe." Sound of applause.*)

Enter MR. S. and STONE, *main entrance.*

STONE. Dad, some one down-stairs might have seen you. Can't you come around to-morrow?

MR. S. No! To-morrow I'll be home. I'm going back this morning.

STONE (*eagerly*). And the money? Did you get it?

MR. S. If I do get it, it won't be because you gave it to me.

STONE (*puzzled*). Well, what are you going to do?

MR. S. Do? The first thing is to ask you again. Are you going to give me the money or not?

STONE (*desperately*). No! I'm not.

MR. S. (*rising*). Well, I'm going. I wanted to give you a chance to do the right thing.

STONE (*impulsively*). Dad, I wish I could give you the money, but — You see how it is, don't you?

MR. S. (*slowly*). Yes! I see just how it is.

STONE. I'm sorry, Dad. (*Laughter sounds from down-stairs.*) Goodness, Dad, you don't want to be found here.

MR. S. No, it wouldn't be right for a boy to have his friends meet his father.

STONE. Oh! It isn't that. (REN. *passes main entrance. STONE starts, impatiently.*) You can't do any good here. Get the money. I don't care how you get it, but — (*Laughter sounds again.*) They'll be up here soon.

MR. S. (*angrily*). All right, I'm going. I can get the money.

STONE. Where?

MR. S. From your roommate, Mr. Willis.

STONE (*starting back*). What! From him?

MR. S. Yes, from him.

STONE. God, you didn't tell him, did you?

MR. S. Yes, I told him.

STONE (*incredulously*). You told him about me?

MR. S. Yes. He knows just what you are.

STONE. When did you see him? Don't you see he mustn't know, of all people?

MR. S. Why him?

STONE. Oh, he's my roommate, and besides —

MR. S. (*interrupting*). Well, he knows; and what's more, he loves the same girl you do. And I hope he gets her.

STONE. God! (*Gesture of despair; turns to MR. S.*) When did you see him? Tell me! I must know. I will!

MR. S. I saw him last night. I came here to this room, and he caught me.

STONE. What! Last night? Here?

MR. S. Yes. I came to get the money—and I got it.

STONE. What! You got the money? (*Goes over to desk, opens drawer.*) It's gone.

MR. S. (*taking step toward door*). Yes! I guess that's all now. I must go back.

STONE (*appealingly*). No, Dad, don't, don't!

MR. S. (*softening, lays hand on STONE's shoulder*). Boy, don't take it like that. I ain't got the money.

STONE. It's gone. Where is it?

MR. S. He, Willis, took it away from me. He says he's goin' to give it back to you.

STONE (*sitting down, puts head in hands*). God!

MR. S. And he's going to lend me enough to pay the note. He's a real man, he is.

STONE. But he'll tell her, and then—it'll be all off. (*Hopelessly.*) I might just as well go back now. You—you've spoiled everything.

MR. S. You're wrong about Mr. Willis. College makes some boys, and breaks others. He's in the first class; you're in the second.

STONE. And you think he won't tell her?

MR. S. I know he won't.

STONE. If he only doesn't. (*Sound in hall outside. STONE motions to L. E.*) Some one's coming. Quick, Dad! For God's sake, get in there!

MR. S. (*rising*). So you're still ashamed of me?

STONE. Oh, quick!

(*MR. S. stands for a moment, fists clenched. Bows head. Exits, L. E. STONE goes to R. C.*)

Enter PEA. and REN.

PEA. Oh, for the love of Mike, Bill, why don't you stick around a while?

REN. Stick around nothing. Geraldine might propose to me.

PEA. I tell you the only thing to do is to stick around. She'll get tired of you soon. Then I'll start.

(*Pats himself on chest.*)

REN. Well, you can start any time you want to. I'm going home.

PEA. Oh, say, Bill. (*Notices STONE standing near R. E.*) What're you sore at, Budd?

STONE. Nothing.

PEA. You remind me of an undertaker. Well, it ain't my funeral, as the old lady said when she kissed the cow. (*Sound outside.*) Here comes the gang.

Enter MRS. B., ZEL., GER. and WIL.

MRS. B. Mr. Willis has suggested that we go to the tennis courts and watch the Stevens match.

PEA. Sure, that will be fine.

REN. I can't go. I've got to catch a train in (*taking out watch*) thirty minutes.

PEA. Or in vulgar parlance, a half hour.

GER. (*going to REN.*). Won't you please stay, Bill?

REN. I'm sorry, but I have to go home. The folks will be expecting me.

PEA. Never mind, Geraldine—er—Miss Harris, I'll be here to take you around.

MRS. B. Must you go, Mr. Rendall?

REN. Yes. You see, I'm stuck out of college, and the sooner I get away and to work the better.

(Goes from one to another, shaking hands.)

MRS. B. (*to WIL.*). Shall we go to the tennis match?

WIL. Yes, the rest of us might as well go. (*To REN.*) So-long, Bill.

REN. (*shaking hands with WIL.*). So-long, Ted. Good luck to you. (*To PEA.*) Peanut, step in that room and get my suit-case. I put it there a little while ago. (*Motions to L. E.*)

STONE. I'll get it, Bill. (*Starts forward.*)

REN. No, let the Freshman do it. Go in, Peanut. (*STONE steps back. Exit PEA., L. E.*) Well, I'll say good-bye.

(Shakes hands with GER.)

PEA. (*excitedly*). Ted, there's a man in there.

MRS. B. A man?

PEA. Yes, an old fellow. Do you know who it is, Budd?

STONE. Why—er—no.

REN. Bring him out here. (*Goes to L. E.*) Come here, you. (*Enter MR. S., L. E.*) It's the same man who was here yesterday to see you, Budd.

MRS. B. Don't you think we had better turn him over to the police?

REN. Yes. I guess we'd better. (*To STONE.*) Have you seen him before, Budd?

STONE. Yes, he comes from the same place I do.

REN. (*to MR. S.*). Well, tell us who you are. What are you doing here, anyway?

MR. S. I—I know Mr. Stone. I came down here because I knew he had some money, and I wanted it.

REN. Oh, you're a thief, then.

MR. S. Yes.

REN. (*turning to WIL.*). What shall we do with him, Ted?

WIL. (*slowly*). I think it's up to Budd. It was his money the man was after. Let him say.

ZEL. Oh! let him go. He's poor, Budd.

(*STONE flinches.*)

STONE (*looking at MR. S.*). It wouldn't do any good to arrest him. Let him go, Ted.

WIL. (*kindly*). You'd better go back home, sir.

MR. S. (*starting to say something, stops; takes a step toward the door; turns to STONE*). I thank you.

(*Starts toward main entrance.*)

STONE (*clutching fists, makes sudden resolution; firmly*). This man isn't a tramp. He's my father.

REN. What!

STONE. Yes. (*Turns to others.*) You people thought I was rich. I've always spent lots of money, and I've bought good clothes and said that my father was wealthy. But he isn't. We're poor—you know all that now. And I've been a cad and a coward, and when my Dad came here for some money, I wouldn't give it to him. I sent him in that room when you came in. But now (*voice breaks*) I can't see him go away like this. He's my Dad, and I'm going to stand by him.

(*Goes to father's side. Both up c. Pause.*)

WIL. Won't you sit down, Mr. Stone?

MR. S. No, thank you. I'm goin' home now.

STONE. We're both going home. It's the only thing to do. (*Turns to ZEL.*) I suppose you'll never want to see or hear from me again. I've been deceiving you all along, and I'm

sorry—but I love you. So I guess this is the last time we'll see each other. (*Pause.*) Good-bye.

ZEL. It isn't good-bye, Budd. I'm glad you're going home, because it's the right thing to do, but I want you to come back—for me. (*Gives STONE hand.*) Last night I said you were drifting, but you're stopped now, and turned against the tide. I love you, Budd.

CURTAIN



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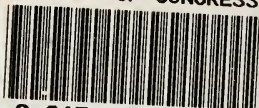
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